



## **HIGHLIGHTS REPORT**



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## INTRODUCTION

The European Education Policy Network (EEPN) chose to focus on how to make teacher and school leader careers more attractive in different European countries in its first year, 2019. An important body of work by the network was the delivery of four desk research papers on the topic from different perspectives. Two desk research papers offer analyses of good, inspiring practices from different school systems, one from a practitioner and parent perspective, another on policy implementation and experimentation. Another desk research has been done on current education research on the topic while the fourth one identified and analysed relevant European Commission funded projects. The four papers together analyse examples from various European countries and from different phases of teaching careers considering how effectively these practices, projects, policies address the most important issues school systems are facing in connection to teachers and school leaders.

The aim of the research was to offer a basis for policy development and implementation at different governance levels as well as for informing the work of the European Commission (EC) on teacher and school leader careers for inclusive quality education in all European Union Member. The research will form the basis for formulating and promoting policy recommendations in the field of teacher and school leader careers by EEPN later in 2019 and will also support the future work of EEPN until 2022.

During the research phase, sometimes the same or very similar examples have been chosen, offering a solid base for tentative recommendations.

## CURRENT POLICY FRAMEWORK

According to European Council Recommendations 2018/C 195/01, Member States are to “support educational staff and teaching in order to enable educational staff to promote common values and deliver inclusive education, through

- measures to empower educational staff helping them convey common values, and promote active citizenship while transmitting a sense of belonging and responding to the diverse needs of learners; and
- promoting initial and continued education, exchanges and peer learning and peer counselling activities as well as guidance and mentoring for educational staff.”

European education policy recommendations are to be implemented in the framework of the EU2020 headline targets that are assessed in each EU Member State within the European Semester Process. Two of the headline targets are directly related to education: reducing early school leaving and increasing participation at tertiary education. At the same time, some others are indirectly related to education: reducing poverty and social exclusion, and increasing employment.

While teachers have been identified as key actors in achieving the EU targets and goals, experience and statistics show that there are several aspects of teacher career paths that need to be addressed to overcome the main challenges in relation to attracting and attaining teachers to be able to make them a reality.

Desk research was looking into solutions successfully addressing the following main challenges: teacher and school leader shortage, leaving the profession early, demotivation, burn-out, low social status, inadequate salaries, professional development needs and supporting daily work, maintaining and increasing quality and inclusion in education. All these appeared essential for teachers' and school leaders' inspiring professional career paths regardless the perspective of the research.



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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM PRACTITIONER AND PARENT PERSPECTIVE

### Induction phase of teacher careers

There are significant differences in nearly all aspects of organisation, planning, forms of support for novices and assessment in the systems of teacher induction in different European countries. However, the key to a successful start to a teaching career and a first step towards preventing early leaving from the profession is the presence of a system providing an induction period.

There are differences – according to the traditions of a given school system – between the organisation of induction programmes. There is the dilemma of ‘balancing between autonomous institutions and a steering government’ (Snoek, 2011). There are also differences in the roles and training of mentors as well as in the roles of school heads and novices’ colleagues. There are major differences in the existence, structure and process of the final examination.

### Recruitment and mobility of teachers

According to Eurydice (2018) data, almost three quarters of school systems have fully or dominantly open recruitment systems. In some education systems there are competitive examinations in place for teacher recruitment.

Teacher mobility can be a result of teachers wishing to move for personal, family or professional reasons. In general, teachers seek mobility for professional and personal needs or for preferences (e.g. to work closer to home or to their family or to improve their work situation). The most common reasons for teachers requesting a move are not job-related, but rather personal or family reasons (Eurydice, 2018). Another possible reason is the need to change school environment. On the other hand, education authorities also need to secure an even distribution of teachers, ensure that all posts are filled as well as manage school re-organisations and closures.

Successful mobility schemes are reflective to teachers’ needs and wishes making it possible for professionals to become mobile for non-professional reasons. At the same time, quality and inclusiveness of education can only be ensured if authorities play a significant role in organising teacher mobility. Mobility is also a strong element in teachers’ professional development and can be seen as an important feature of career paths. (Dolton, 2018; EACEA, 2015.)

### Professional support in early and later career stages

Continuous professional development (CPD) programmes can be considered compulsory in all EU countries (Eurydice 2018), but their extent varies from country to country. There are major differences between time and budget provisions for CPD, too.

Apart from direct CPD activities, most countries offer professional support in personal and professional matters. It usually takes the form of advisory and support services in health and well-being, interpersonal relationships (e.g. conflict management) and in developing and improving personal professional skills. In most European countries, professional support is also available for teachers in the form of specialized services such as school psychologists, speech therapists and auxiliary staff when working with special education needs students.

Digitalisation has had a major impact on CPD. Massive Open Online Courses are widely available for teachers. Online communities of practice are also becoming more and more widespread.



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## Pathways to school leader positions

There are two pathways to school leadership. The one that is rooted in daily teaching practice and successfully acquiring a leadership position is a result of being a successful teaching professional. This is the prevalent pathway in the majority of European countries. There are also examples of the other pathway to school leadership (e.g. Netherlands and France) where leadership positions can be seen as a separate career path. (EACEA, 2015; Scottish Government, 2018; Snoek, 2011.) In most European countries, pathways to leadership include specialised training

There are major differences between the lengths of appointment for school leadership. Experienced former school heads often participate at leadership support and training programmes (EACEA 2015; Eurydice, 2018.)

## Career path systems

There are two main trends in career paths in education in Europe (Eurydice, 2018.).

- **Flat career structure:** a single level career structure that applies to all qualified teachers. A salary scale may be in use, but it usually relates to years spent in service and, in some cases, performance. A flat career structure may allow teachers to widen their experience or take on additional tasks or responsibilities.
- **Multi-level career structure:** a career structure with several formally defined career levels. These levels are usually defined by sets of competences and/or responsibilities. Within a multi-level career structure, different career levels are structured in terms of ascending complexity and greater responsibility.

Both structures can be incentive for teachers to choose teaching as a profession, but most importantly also to stay in the profession, especially when a further step in careers also leads to salary increase. Multi-level career structures exist in about half of EU countries (Eurydice, 2018), and in most cases school leaders are involved in promotion decisions implementing a subsidiarity approach to career paths. Multi-level career structures are more closely linked to performance and thus in most cases lead more directly to better quality in education.

## Appraisal systems and practices

It is general practice to have some kind of systemic appraisal for in-service teachers in place. Although these measures are usually applicable to all teachers, their frequency is often left to the school or local educational authority. They have a very important role in reviewing and determining professional development needs. (EACEA, 2015; Eurydice, 2018.) Appraisal systems also have a role in detecting low performance and they lead to supportive/remedial measures.

School leaders usually have a very important role in teacher appraisal – either organizing or participating in it - but many school head training schemes do not offer training in the field. Competence frameworks, in place in most EU countries, are used as important points of reference in systematic appraisal. (Menon, 2012.)

Classroom observation and discussion is the most common method for appraisal, sometimes combined with self-evaluation. In an ideal case, the voice of students and parents is also facilitated in appraisal processes, but it is only possible in about a quarter of EU countries (EACEA, 2015.)

There are less systematic examples of appraisal systems, e.g. Awards by governments, NGOs or professional organisations. They usually have no impact on teacher salaries, but they may have a major impact on self-esteem and thus lead to professional satisfaction.



## Salary systems and social status measures

Paying well is one crucial element in attracting and attaining the best and brightest. Research has clearly demonstrated a link between higher teacher salaries and a country's educational performance (Dolton & Marcenaro-Guiterrez, 2011).

It is more difficult to measure the impact of teachers' social status, the social and cultural aspects determining how well-respected teachers are, but these aspects clearly have an impact on learning outcomes as well as the attractiveness of the teaching professions as a career choice as well as a long-term career commitment, just like teacher wages.

In most European countries, research (e.g. Dolton, 2018) shows – that there is a 'pecking order' with primary school teachers having the lowest social status and school heads having the highest. This directly corresponds with salary levels.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM A POLICY ADVICE AND IMPLEMENTATION PERSPECTIVE

### Initial teacher education

In the national education policies of the EU countries, there is an associated tendency to seek for higher levels of formal qualifications in initial teacher education (ITE), but also a trend towards more diversified forms of professional development than were available in the past. (European Commission, 2018a) Therefore, the focus of this desk research paper is on several differing policy strategies – strategies of achieving high academic standards and status of teachers and strategies of overcoming the shortage of practitioners; prioritizing formal institutional training or continuous school-centred professional development of school leaders.

Initial teacher education is one of the most important factors in assuring an effective functioning of an education system. Teacher education can also be seen as an element of the more general policy objective of increasing the attractiveness of the teaching profession (European Commission, 2018a). In high performing systems, the future teachers are trained in academic universities, where they receive sound theoretical ground as well as relevant practical skills. The necessary precondition of a successful training is a careful selection of highly motivated and academically oriented applicants. In countries where student outcomes are high, the following features are evident:

- Teacher education is required to be research-driven.
- Graduate teachers are capable of applying research to their work in a constructive and reflective way.
- Relatively small numbers of institutions are involved in ITE provision allowing for a critical mass to conduct research at a high level.
- Such institutes span/combine education sectors allowing for meaningful synergies in ITE for early childhood, primary, second-level and other sectors of education". (Sahlberg, 2012.)

A coherent system of teacher education should extend across all the phases: ITE, the period of induction and/or probation, and the continuing professional development of teachers and school leaders in terms of capability in pedagogy and management.

### High academic standards and research-based education

Most of the EU countries consider a master's degree a necessary precondition for teaching; not only in secondary, but also in primary schools. Countries, which still practice to educate teachers at a bachelor's level, have nevertheless switched from college to university education.



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Further efforts of raising the quality of the teaching corps are reflected in higher entry standards. The dominant tendency in the EU countries is setting higher requirements for entrants to teacher education studies. Rigorous entry requirements are also related to the attractiveness of the profession: higher standards of education usually translate into better employment opportunities and higher earnings (OECD, 2018).

Another observable tendency is the increased focus on the induction process. Most teachers leave the profession during the first several years of their teaching career, and for that reason the effective system of adaptation for the beginning teachers is crucial in order to retain young professionals. Besides that, teachers have to prove that they are fit for the teaching job. Therefore, they often have to undergo probational periods before gaining access to the permanent teaching position. Induction, where it exists, may occur at the same time as probation or be an integral part of it (European Commission, 2018b). Induction policy can be implemented in different ways.

To achieve and maintain a high level of professionalism for teaching and teacher standards are defined and upheld in the teaching profession by

- setting the requirements for entry into teaching;
- maintaining a register of teachers who meet the Council registration requirements;
- establishing and monitoring standards for all phases of teacher education;
- developing and promoting a code of professional conduct; and
- investigating complaints regarding the fitness to teach of registered teacher (European Commission, 2018a).

Research-based teacher education is based on the following key principles:

- Teachers need a deep knowledge of the most recent advances of research in the subjects they teach. In addition, they need to be familiar with the research on how something can be taught and learned.
- Teachers must adopt a research-oriented attitude toward their work. This means learning to take an analytical and open-minded approach to their work, drawing conclusions for the development of education based on different sources of evidence coming from the recent research as well as their own critical and professional observations and experiences.
- Teacher education in itself should also be an object of study and research (Niemi, 2008).

## School leadership

Education policies that aim to build emphases on school leadership capacity consequently have an important role. Research evidence shows that school heads are second only in school to classroom teachers in their influence upon student outcomes (Day & Sammons, 2014). The provision of appropriate continuing professional development for school leaders is of great importance, especially when it is considered that, conventionally, leadership rarely features in initial teacher education programmes (European Commission, 2018a).

## The academic approach:



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Several countries tend to apply the academic approach for raising the quality of school leadership across the education system. The national institutions offer, among other options, academically-oriented training, which can be undertaken at different stages of the professional career of school leaders – pre-appointment, induction and further professional development.

## Licensing, certification and mentoring

In the majority of countries, the pre-appointment training of school leaders is preferable and is considered as an advantage in case of competitive placement, but usually it is not a necessary pre-condition. Apparently, requirements of obligatory leadership training for those willing to apply for school headship could reduce the number of prospective candidates. On the other hand, requirements of leadership training for acting school heads are convenient in many EU countries. In cases presented above, we observe a wide array of options, including courses for beginning, mid-term and experienced school leaders. Different countries practise different induction procedures, including licensing, certification and/or appraisal.

In our understanding, a strong motivating factor for school leaders is the possibility of acquiring a formal postgraduate award: a postgraduate diploma or a master's degree. It is an attribute of higher academic status and prestige as well as an evidence of higher level of competence in education systems where school principals periodically have to undergo the appraisal procedure. However, the requirement should not be imposed on school leaders as not all good practitioners are academically oriented or can allocate time required for the academic studies. Therefore, a wide range of short-term courses for school leaders is no less important in order to offer possibilities of continuous professional development. Professional associations could play a dominant role in this respect as fellow professionals apparently know best which training options are most relevant and effective. Cooperation of professional associations and educational leadership academies/centres seem to be the most productive for further development.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM EDUCATION RESEARCH

### On teachers

#### Pre-service teachers' motivation to teach

Across time and place, the main reasons for wanting to teach remain a wish to work with children and engage in some form of service to society, often accompanied by the desire for intellectual fulfilment. Teachers balance these personal desires with external factors including their view of the nature of teaching work, the attractiveness of working conditions and how it fits with other aspects of their lives. However, there is no single pattern of reasons.

However, changes in motivation are influenced by in-school opportunities to learn and develop as teachers.

#### The retention of beginning teachers

A longstanding problem in the teacher workforce is the continuing and substantial numbers of qualified teachers who leave the profession within five years. Workload was the most frequently cited reason for having left, or for leaving in the future. The data spoke to the reality of teaching being worse than expected, and the nature (rather than the quantity) of the workload, linked to notions of performativity and accountability, being a crucial factor. The European Commission (2013)





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recommended that recruitment to initial teacher education should be widened, and student teachers should be made aware of real-life teaching requirements. The Commission also recognised early career support as essential to retention (European Commission, 2013).

### **In-service teacher motivation**

The importance of professional support is not confined to beginning teachers. A strong professional community and exciting working environment, along with stimulating and challenging colleagues, has also long been considered important (Carson & Chase, 2009; Mani, 2002; Peterson & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 2003), providing an opportunity for institutional support and personal fulfilment (Praver and Oga-Baldwin, 2008).

However, external factors are also important. Financial benefits such as salary, pension and insurance are often mentioned as extrinsic factors motivating in-service teachers. That such factors are closely interrelated is seen in Sinclair (2008), who identifies overlapping categories of 'the perceived benefits or convenience of teaching', 'the nature of teaching work' and 'the status of teaching'.

Teacher autonomy also contributes to their retention, and to the quality of their work. It has long been recognised that teacher motivation is enriched when teachers are able to choose teaching materials, programmes and teaching methods, and determine classroom organization and discipline (Kaiser, 1981).

### **In-service teacher demotivation**

There is a long and substantive literature confirming that the most significant demotivating factors for teachers include stressful working environments, high amounts of administration, limited teacher autonomy, repetitive teaching and poor student attitudes and behaviours, coupled with inadequate career structures, few opportunities for personal development and low salaries (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Kiziltepe, 2006).

Higher demands, particularly time pressures, are strongly associated with lower teacher well-being, whereas levels of resources were more moderately associated. Teacher wellbeing was in turn predictive of higher engagement and lower motivation to leave the profession.

Kelchtermans (2017) suggests that there are a number of lessons that can be learnt from a review of current studies on teacher attrition. First, relationships play a central role in maintaining teacher commitment, as does social recognition and a sense of belonging. Second, performativity policies impact negatively and increase teacher attrition. Finally, from the perspective of career and teachers' work lives, there are few possibilities in teaching to gain vertical promotion. In fact, one of the only upward career steps in teaching is moving into school leadership and becoming a principal. Yet, formal leadership is so fundamentally different from being a teacher, that it is more like a career switch rather than a promotion. Nevertheless, many teachers are interested in taking on educationally relevant responsibilities, which may imply that they spend less time in a classroom working with their students, but these are not always available.

### **Teacher motivation, student motivation and student performance**

Studies suggest motivated teachers are more likely to engage with deep rather than surface learning goals (Retelsdorf & Günther, 2011) and students report higher interest and enjoyment in learning (Wild, Enzle, Nix & Deci, 1997). This helps form a virtuous circle, as highly motivated students also enthuse teachers (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008; Bernaus, Wilson, & Gardner, 2009). However, low teacher motivation leads to highly controlled, teacher rather than student-centred teaching and an underestimation of student capabilities (Hein et al., 2012; Kiziltepe, 2006, 2008).



## On school leaders

### Motivation to become a school leader

The attractiveness of a school leadership position can be influenced by the difference in salaries between experienced teachers and school leaders. Compared to the minimum salary received by teachers with 10 years of experience, school leaders receive an up to 25% higher minimum statutory salary in most European education systems.(Tremosa et al., 2018).

Becoming a school leader can also be seen as a career progression for teachers. In terms of career trajectory leading to school leadership positions, there is often a progression that starts with being a teacher, then taking up additional responsibility (being in charge of coordinating all classes of a certain level for example), and then possibly taking up professional development courses in leadership. At some point, one then becomes a deputy principal, sometimes by appointment, more often upon application. This is often viewed as a steppingstone towards becoming a formal school leader (a school principal), with some skipping the position of deputy principal. Occasionally, school leaders progress to positions in school supervisory authorities or lower levels of education ministries.

### Recruitment and qualification

There is no universal recruitment or qualification process for school leadership positions in Europe. Instead, recruitment or qualification processes can be differentiated by eligibility criteria, selection criteria, level of decision-making, recruitment procedure, and phase of career training (OECD, 2008; Schleicher & OECD, 2012; Taipale, 2012). Across Europe, there appears to be a struggle to attract enough candidates to become school leaders.

### In-service school leader motivation and demotivation

To the best of our knowledge, there is no data on in-service school leader motivation that cuts across Europe. Therefore, insights from selected studies from the European and non-European context are offered. These are in some instances based on case-studies, so findings may be contextually bound.

First and foremost, job satisfaction leads to job retention. School leaders experiencing a high level of job satisfaction are more likely to stay in their job. Motivation and satisfaction of school leaders are influenced by both external and internal factors (Darmody & Smyth, 2016). Motivating factors can be the love for children, a sense of duty, and the feeling of being responsible (Erdem & Cicekdemir, 2016).

An excessive workload, time pressure in general and, especially, lacking time to cooperate with and evaluate teachers are key factors for demotivation of school leaders. In addition, changes in education policy can exert additional pressure on school leaders as they try to implement them (Wang et al., 2018). Due to the afore-mentioned high administrative workload coupled with the generally high demands, a lack of administrative support as well as a lack of management knowledge can dampen the motivation of school leaders further (Darmody & Smyth, 2016; Erdem & Cicekdemir, 2016).

Over the last ten to 15 years, several policies have been implemented in various European countries to support school leaders. These include (depending on the country):

- Extended training programmes before nomination as well as expanded professional development after the appointment.
- Introduction of coaching and networking programmes for educational leaders.
- Reduction of administrative workload by hiring additional administrative staff.
- More time for management and leadership tasks (reduction of teaching workload).



- Development of guidelines and frameworks of excellency, both for schools and school leaders.
- Transfer of competences from supervisory boards to the level individual schools in order to empower schools and school leaders.

### Alternative career paths towards school leadership

Although, traditionally, most school leaders are selected from within the education sector, a teaching degree is not a compulsory requirement for becoming a school leader in all European countries (Pont, Nusche, Moorman, & Hopkins, 2008; Popović, Alfirević, & Relja, 2019; Taipale, 2012). Depending on the particular country, different models enable professionals with a non-teaching background to become school leaders, at least formally speaking.

In Europe, school leadership as a separate career path (i.e. becoming a principal without having been a teaching professional before) is a virtually non-existent path. Further research but also an exploration on the policy level of possibilities to employ professionals with a non-teaching background could help alleviate shortages of school leaders.

### Effects of school leaders on teacher motivation and student performance

Motivation and job satisfaction are generally viewed as central elements to high job performance. Therefore, the impact of school leaders on teacher motivation is of special interest. Looking at instructional leadership, findings from various studies from the non-European international realm suggest a link between instructional leadership of principals and satisfaction and commitment of teachers (Al-Mahdy, Emam, & Hallinger, 2018; Krug, 1992; Sheppard, 1996; for a similar study where such a link could not be determined, see Kouali, 2017). Similarly, there seems to be a connection between transformational leadership and the organizational commitment and job satisfaction of teachers (Bogler, 2001; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Finally, there are also indications that a cooperative leadership team as well as the leadership support for sharing and distributing tasks among principals and teachers positively predict the organizational commitment of teachers (Hulpia, Devos, & Keer, 2009)

## THE MOST RELEVANT EC FUNDED PROJECTS

The following sub-categories were distinguished and some projects under them selected:

### 1. Diversity in schools and adapting to local needs

“Diversity” as a topic was selected because this often brings new requirements for teachers, including teaching the curriculum to children who come from different cultural backgrounds and who may have difficulties with the teaching language. Such issues are addressed in the **NAOS** project.

### 2. School Innovation

The topic of school innovation is being addressed in the **Open Schools for Open Societies (OSOS)** project. This project’s approach is to describe and implement a process that will facilitate the transformation of schools into innovative ecosystems. The ecosystems are to be acting as shared sites of science learning for which leaders, teachers, students and the local community share responsibility, over which they share authority, and from which they all benefit through the increase of their communities’ science capital and the development of responsible citizenship.



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### 3. Well-being and emotional intelligence

School staff's social and emotional competencies have been recognised as being vital for the development of students' social and emotional competencies, behavioural and academic achievement and learning and development in general, and for school staff's own well-being. Weighing in to the importance of the topic, two projects in the area of well-being and emotional intelligence were selected: the **Hand in Hand** project, which also addresses the whole-school approach, and the **Learning in a new key** project, which built on improving teachers' competences in the teaching arts as a tool of inclusion.

### 4. Developing teacher education

Under the realm of developing teacher education, the following two projects were selected:

**Education For Future - Partnership Development for a joint and sustainable International Master's Level Programme for Education Professionals** developed, tested, evaluated, adapted and implemented a joint international Master's level in-service programme for teachers, school leaders and other educational specialists. The programme created a context for supporting these education professionals to strengthen their leadership capacities and their expertise with respect to school development and innovation. **European Joint Doctorate in Teacher Education (Edite)** is creating the first ever transnational doctoral degree for professionals in the field of teacher education.

### 5. Support, mentoring and teacher development

Concerning projects related to support, mentoring and teacher development, the following four were selected. In two of them, *Etwinning* and *We think everywhere*, the focus area is on the use of ICT and digital media.

**Mentoring between teachers in secondary and high schools.** This project developed an elaborated model of mentoring between teachers with a universal character and could be used in the primary and secondary schools in all European countries, despite the differences in educational systems.

**Leadership capacity building for career development of educational staff** targeted headteachers, teachers and policy makers. The project developed school leadership knowledge and skills for career development of educational staff.

**ETwinning** offers a platform for staff (teachers, headteachers, librarians, etc.), working in a school in one of the European countries involved, to communicate, collaborate, develop projects, share and be part of a pan-European learning community through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

**'We Think Everywhere' - New Pedagogies - Embracing the Digital World of Children** investigated and developed innovative pedagogical methods in which digital media is used to generate thinking, knowledge and learning in very young children.

## REFERENCES

For references see the relevant desk research papers.